

## Why the Ace of Spades in Our logo?

By Sandi Hughes | November 20, 2016

Long before the current familiarity of the word “trump”, the players of many card games understood the hierarchy within a traditional deck of playing cards. Most games today, at least that I’m aware of, consider aces to trump or out-rank even the king, the highest face card in the deck. When you’re in the marketing business, placing high among the competition is more favorable than not... unless you have a secret sauce or an *ace up your sleeve*, as is our case. More on that later, but first let’s look at the world’s most famous encyclopedia and see what light they can shed on the Ace of Spades.

Excerpt from Wikipedia on “Ace”...

An **ace** is a [playing card](#). In the standard [French deck](#), an ace has a single [suit](#) symbol (a heart, diamond, spade, or club) located in the middle of the card, sometimes large and decorated, especially in the case of the [Ace of Spades](#). This embellishment on the Ace of Spades started when [King James VI of Scotland and I of England](#) required an insignia of the printing house to be printed on the Ace of Spades. This insignia was necessary for identifying the printing house and stamping it as having paid the new [stamp tax](#). Although this requirement was abolished in 1960, the tradition has been kept by many card makers.<sup>[1]</sup> In other countries the stamp and embellishments are usually found on ace cards; clubs in France, diamonds in Russia, and hearts in Genoa because they have the most blank space.

The word "ace" comes from the [Old French](#) word *as* (from Latin 'as') meaning 'a unit', from the name of a small [Roman coin](#). It originally meant the side of a [die](#) with only one mark, before it was a term for a playing card. Since this was the lowest roll of the die, it traditionally meant 'bad luck' in [Middle English](#), but as the ace is often the highest playing card, its meaning has since changed to mean 'high-quality, excellence'. This connotation has seen the word applied to an [unreachable tennis serve](#), a [successful fighter pilot](#) and more generally as a person proficient in his or her field, especially a sporting field.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ace>

Quite accidentally, I saw the “ACE” in the word “Marketplace” while creating the logo concept. Symbolism is important in any company’s branding as it inspires recognition

making a company more memorable. It helps people relate to what the business stands for and can illuminate the intentions of their organization, products and services. This is the reason for the integration of the ace of spades into our logo and icon/avatar, and the reason for publishing this discussion.



To understand its deeper meaning more fully, I would like to elaborate on four words from the above Wikipedia article that represent my personal vision of and for Marketplace Cooperative, Inc. (MCI).

## Unit

“A unit” implies wholeness and unity. If such a unit is constructed of more than one part or has any moving parts, there is an implication of connectedness and finely-tuned interaction among its parts.

Certainly this is a desirable goal for any business and definitely applies to MCI because of our business model. In the article [Why consider a worker-owned cooperative?](#), I explain the many benefits and primary attraction of worker cooperatives in a society commonly referred to as “corporate America”. Like most businesses, we have many moving parts that require proper attention in order to operate smoothly. However, where traditional corporations have an owner, CEO or President over a team or board of executives making all the decisions, in a worker-cooperative we are *all* equal decision-makers. This is very empowering for everyone on the staff and requires unique rules for effective operation. Worker-cooperatives are an expression of democracy in the purest sense when defined as “a system of governance by the whole population”.

## High quality

This phrase implies that something is “of superior caliber” using the best materials and patient craftsmanship. The only reasons for aiming at high quality anything are because it feels good to the creator and is appreciated by the recipient. Anything less should be unacceptable.

As a business support company, we know that customer service must be efficient or it could mean lost profits for our clients. We don’t publish any guarantees as of this writing, but I can assure you that we are more than fair when it comes to backing our work to provide the best quality possible.

## Excellence

Where “high quality” often refers to products, “excellence” generally refers to service or performance. Excellence is defined as “the quality of being outstanding or extremely good”.

The founders of MCI are mature entrepreneurs with varied business skills who have mastered their trades through years of experience, are educated in business practices, and put customer satisfaction at the top of the “IMPORTANT” list. We take pride in our “safe environment” where clients feel comfortable to be honest and open, communicating what is wanted and how the end of a project looks and feels to everyone engaged in the process. Business isn’t just about the money. It’s about *excellence*. We stand by it 100%.

## Proficient

This may feel like a synonym, but this example may help distinguish the difference.

I do excellent work creating websites or illustrations because I have lots of experience doing so, but am I capable of effectively doing everything my position requires of me? As a business owner, I also work with customers, negotiate with vendors, set pricing, create policies, and troubleshoot challenges.

Proficiency involves knowing more than is expected and having the ability to intuitively feel your way into uncharted areas of business. This is definitely an asset in a worker-owned cooperative where all workers are also co-owners and expected at times to cover for others in their absence. Workers don’t rely on supervisors or owners to make decisions and the customers expect to always be speaking “the owner”. Each of us is empowered to handle customer service completely and to their satisfaction. That’s proficiency!

To summarize, the brand using the Ace symbolizes a finely-tuned company (*unit*) of worker-owners who are *proficient*, provide *high quality* products and services, stay on top of their game to maintain *excellent* in their industry and always put the customer first.

One more symbol is *Spade*, defined as “a distinctively shaped tool used for digging or cutting earth, sand, turf, etc.” It’s an “earth mover”! MCI aims to improve the way businesses operate and more specifically the way they attract customers. Make note of it and see what happens.



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